



Kids Page



OF THE EPA TRIBAL WASTE JOURNAL

ENSURE A CLEAN FUTURE: EDUCATE CHILDREN ABOUT ILLEGAL DUMPING

As the voices of the future, children inspire a community conscience and they can have a significant impact on illegal dumping prevention programs. Illegal dumping is a habit for many living on reservations, and today's children could be tomorrow's illegal dumpers. Tribes can break the cycle by teaching children about the dangers of illegal dumping and providing them with environmental values. Children tend to share their enthusiasm with parents and other adults, compelling them to think about the harmful effects of illegal dumping. Children may even motivate adults to change their behavior and ensure a bright future.

Thermometer Exchange

Deanna Himango works for the Fond du Lac Resource Management Division and agrees that it is important to bring environmental messages close to home. She conducted a door-to-door mercury thermometer exchange with the reservation's ninth and tenth graders. Before venturing out into the community, students learned about the health threats associated with disposing of hazardous materials at dump sites. After Ms. Himango's lesson, they went to private residences with non-mercury thermometers and exchanged them for mercury thermometers.

"Outreach activities with the schools assisted in getting the message of preventing illegal dumping into the hearts and minds of the young as well as into the families of the Fond du Lac Community."

—Deanna Himango, Fond du Lac Natural Resource Division

RENIE the Recycling Robot

The Wyandotte Tribe created RENIE (Recyclable Environmental Needs in Education), a remote-control robot, to educate children about proper waste management and recycling. RENIE is a legend due to the dedication of Barbara Collier and the rest of the Wyandotte Environmental Department. Ms. Collier

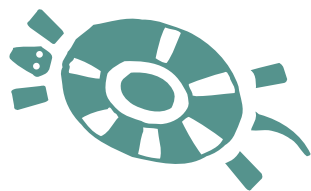


designed RENIE as an attractive trash truck with a smile for a grill. She secured grant funding to have a company produce the robot. Although the project was expensive, it paid off. RENIE truly captures the imagination of children and makes it fun for them to learn about environmental issues. The Environmental Department prepares PowerPoint presentations, and RENIE delivers them to a captivated audience. One of the most successful presentations involved placing waste reduction and reuse into a cultural context by reminding children that Native

Americans used every part of the buffalo. They didn't waste anything and, consequently, did not produce trash. RENIE has visited approximately 100 schools, reaching children in numerous tribes and towns.



Pawnee Environmental Education Center



The environmental education center serves more than 50,000 students in

surrounding schools. Educators gather curriculums from sources such as Project Wild (a national environmental education program) and tailor programs to take advantage of the center's unique ecological setting. Classes visit on field trips and learn about everything from biodiversity and soil conservation to proper solid waste disposal. Programs frequently focus on watersheds and activities that threaten water quality, such as illegal dumping, and certain programs are designed to include parents.

The center has instilled a strong environmental conscience throughout the community. Since it opened, the Pawnee Department of Environmental Conservation & Safety has experienced a flood of phone calls from community members reporting illegal dumping incidents. The Tribe has discovered that the easiest way to reach parents is

SHOP FOR WASTE

Sixth graders in the White Mountain Apache participate in a program called "Shop for Waste." Becky Johnson, who works in the Tribe's Environmental Planning Office, developed the program to teach children about the waste stream. Ms. Johnson encourages students to conduct a waste assessment in their own homes to find out what is being thrown away. She asks them to determine which products could be recycled and which resources are non-renewable. Students list waste prevention activities, discuss recycling, and identify environmentally preferable products. The program also touches on proper solid waste disposal and the dangers of illegal dumping.

through their children and that the best way to deliver an environmental message is to bring it close to home.

CREATIVE PROJECTS FOR YOUNG MINDS

- The Lac Courte Oreilles Conservation Department holds an annual poster contest, with a recycling theme, for elementary school students. Winners are published in the tribal paper.
- Red Lake High School students developed and produced an educational video around the theme, "Put Garbage in Its Place."
- The Delaware Nation prints illegal dumping activity sheets with "Tidy Turtle" and "Rude Rat," characters that are culturally significant to the Tribe.
- The White Earth Natural Resources Department distributes a video titled, "Respect the Earth: It's Home" to Head Start programs and elementary schools across the reservation.
- The Pennsylvania Resources Council sponsored a "Lens on Litter" photo contest. Contestants take photos that expose the scenic, health, and environmental impacts of illegal dumping.
- On Earth Day, Fond du Lac students cleaned up and adopted the road in front of their schools.

Forestry Center Scavenger Hunt

Ms. Himango reaches younger students through a scavenger hunt at the Tribe's Forestry Center. School groups have to answer questions about recycling and illegal dumping to obtain clues that lead them to hidden items. The center's natural setting makes the message more powerful. Ms. Himango explains, "It hits home that we won't continue to have places like this if illegal dumping continues."

Ms. Himango asked students to answer the following pollution prevention questions before distributing scavenger hunt clues:

- ☀ What are some ways you could reduce your paper use?
- ☀ What are some ways you could reduce your food waste?
- ☀ What are some ways you could reduce the amount of waste at home?
- ☀ What are some ways you could help your community prevent pollution?
- ☀ What can you do to make your home more energy efficient?

